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ABSTRACT

Intended for midlife and older women in the job market, this booklet is designed to help them in the process of looking for work outside the home. It helps them assess current skills and identify potential employment barriers; teaches them how to prepare effective written materials to support the job search and how to interview successfully; and provides ways to develop strategies for finding paid work. Five units contain informational material and activities that cover these topics: (1) self-assessment of skills, interests, and achievements and matching skills with employer needs; (2) employment barriers and strategies for overcoming barriers; (3) effective written materials, including resumes, cover letters, application forms, and thank you letters; (4) the employment interviews, including preparation, nonverbal and verbal behavior, interview questions, and closing the interview; and (5) developing a job search plan, including research interview, goal setting, identification of action steps, location of resources, development of activities, establishment of a timeline, and more education and information. A list of nine annotated resources is appended. (YLB)

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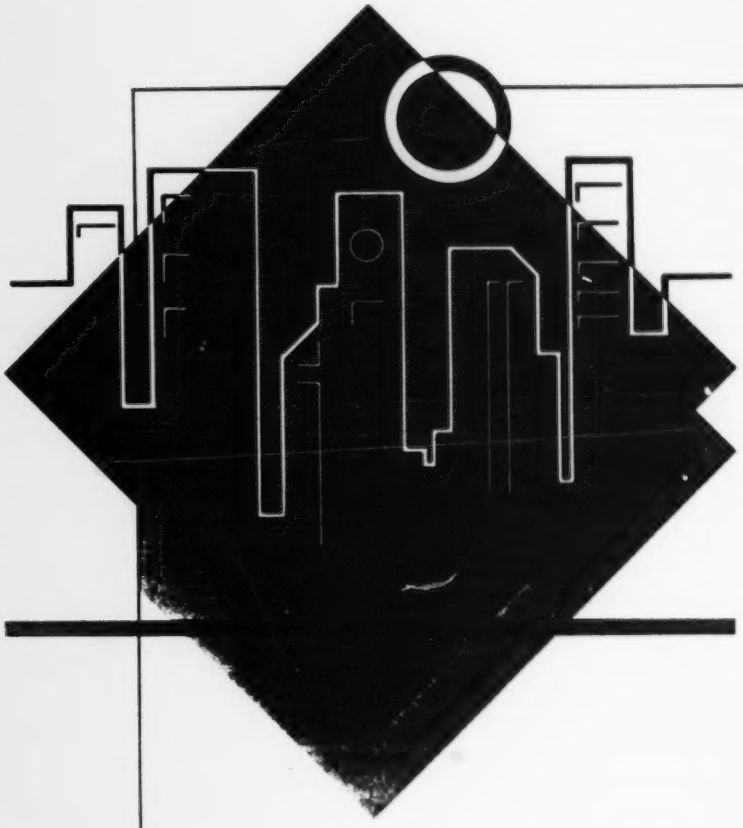
Returning to the Job Market:

A Woman's Guide to Employment Planning



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You are a part of two social trends converging as our nation moves toward a new century. Our population is growing steadily older, and women continue to enter the paid labor force in record numbers. Paid labor force participation by women of all ages has increased dramatically in the last 35 years. By the year 2000, the number of women working outside the home—most of them over the age of 40—will swell by 25 percent to total 60 percent of the entire labor force growth. In fact, in 1991 there were already some 11 million women aged 50 or older in the work force. Older women workers are increasingly important in maintaining a strong economy and a vital society.

Why are so many older women entering, or reentering, the paid work force? More women are choosing to work outside the home after their children are old enough to support themselves. Sometimes, a spouse passes away or leaves due to divorce or separation, and an older woman is forced to reenter the paid work force (or enter the paid work force for the first time). Another reason older women are seeking paid employment is related to simple economics: it is more difficult to survive on a single income in America than it used to be. Finally, many women want to work outside the home to gain new experiences and meet new people.

Midlife has been hailed by many as a time of exciting challenges, renewed hopes, and continuing self-discovery. Discerning employers view a seasoned and experienced work force as a positive element in today's marketplace. Older workers wear their experience with pride as they welcome new adventures. As personal situations change, and career paths turn in both unexpected and long-planned directions, many midlife and older women find themselves in the job market.

The entire process of looking for work outside the home can be an exciting as well as unsettling experience for anyone, particularly if you have never worked outside the home. It can be difficult to know where to begin and how to go about looking for a job. This booklet will help you to assess your current skills and identify potential employment barriers; will teach you how to prepare effective written materials to support your job search and how to interview successfully; and will provide ways to develop strategies for finding paid work.

The Importance of Self-Assessment: Skills, Interests, Achievements

Self-assessment is the key to finding satisfying, rewarding, and successful work outside the home. Effective self-assessment requires an investment of time and effort. You will find, as countless others have, that if you commit yourself to a thorough self-assessment and job search, your investment can pay rich dividends. Why is self-assessment so important? Because it enables you to seek a job that fits you, rather than trying to fit yourself to just any job. Many people try to mold themselves to a job. Doing so often results in frustration, stress, and failure.

Hidden Skills

Sometimes women with little or no work experience discount the skills they have learned through raising a family, volunteering, managing a household, going to school, and enjoying hobbies.

The materials in this booklet are based on real-life stories and will stimulate you to think about your own natural and acquired skills and how your past achievements and experiences relate to paid work. Realizing you do, indeed, possess marketable skills builds your confidence and your self-esteem.

Women who work primarily in the home have numerous business skills that often go unrecognized. Homemakers have developed management skills by being leaders in their family systems. Too often, however, career mothers and homemakers approach the job search with fear and anxiety because they have no "Work Experience" to list on resumes and job applications. When asked about skills, the reply is often, "I can't think of any." For the employer to know what you do well, you must be aware of your skills and be able to describe them.

Being a mother often means being a problem solver, supervisor, project coordinator, and more. You organize projects, and you work with people, material, money, and time to get the job done. Repeatedly, mothers must train novices to master a skill, such as when they teach their children to ride a bike, write a story, or fill out college application forms. Many mothers, unfortunately, do not recognize the value of their skills and knowledge or how to relate their life experiences to the business world.

Giving titles to everyday skills enables an employer to see your potential. Juggling multiple responsibilities qualifies you to be a *coordinator*. When you settle sibling disputes and work out car pool schedules, you are a *negotiator* and *scheduler*. Shopping the newspaper ads, determining the best buys, and collecting bids for a remodeling job are tasks of the *buyer*, *consumer advocate*, or *researcher*. When you convince other parents to serve on the PTA board, you are using the communication skills of the *recruiter*. Helping your child decide how to handle the "school bully" and recognizing signs of stress in family members are knowledge required of the *counselor*. Delivering speeches, conversing with parents, teachers, and neighbors are tasks of the *communicator*.

Homemakers develop further skills through volunteering. An *administrator* establishes a plan and an alternate plan of action, attracts financial support, and serves as a spokesperson for the organization. The *advocate* understands and uses the legisla-

tive process, plans and organizes effective coalitions, and presents arguments to support her position. The ***human service volunteer*** builds a trusting relationship with another individual and helps that individual to develop a new skill or a new attitude. *Fund raisers* write funding proposals and ask others for money. A *volunteer program coordinator* interviews, develops written job descriptions, and supervises volunteers. A *researcher* identifies problem areas, collects data, and writes reports. These are but a few of the skills you may have learned and used in assuming roles and responsibilities as a volunteer.

Recognizing Skills Through Interests, Achievements, and Experiences

Many women underestimate the number of job skills they have acquired over the course of a lifetime. Job skills develop from your interests, past achievements, and experiences. Job skills are required in volunteer activities, previous jobs, and in the variety of home, family, and social roles you fulfill. We recommend that you use your interests, past achievements, and jobs or roles to identify carefully the many skills you have developed. Once identified, you will prioritize those skills most desirable for future paid work.

Assessing Your Special Interests

Evaluating special interests helps us understand ourselves because our interests reflect the values and skills that are most important to us. You do not have to be an expert in your areas of special interest, but having a special interest usually means you can share basic information on the subject with a less-knowledgeable person. Special interests can be anything: sewing, cooking, sports, arts and crafts, bargain-hunting, woodworking, music, or collecting. When your special interests can be related to job possibilities, you bring a lifetime of acquired knowledge and skills to your job search. But where do people acquire special interests? Basically, special interests are acquired through:

- subjects taken in school
- clubs and organizations
- hobbies
- leisure time pursuits
- sports and athletic teams
- seminars and workshops
- books, magazines, newspapers, journals
- things you enjoy doing
- jobs you have held
- things you think about
- things your parents taught you
- places you have lived
- places you have visited
- religious affiliations
- committee work
- volunteer work
- stores you patronize
- things you do on a rainy day
- people with whom you socialize
- roles you occupy
- special training
- programs or conversations you hear

Activity: Twelve Things I Like to Do

The following exercise is designed to help you identify interests that may reflect skills important for your job search. All types of interests—not just those associated with paid employment—can help you identify marketable skills. Interests are an important part of job satisfaction and help maintain balance in your life.

Quickly list 12 things you enjoy doing. There are no right or wrong answers, but you must really enjoy doing each one. When you have finished, continue reading. You will be using this list as a reference tool later.

Twelve Things I Like to Do

Instructions:

1. Quickly list twelve things you really enjoy doing on the form on page 5. (There are no right or wrong answers, but you must really enjoy doing each one!)

2. Go back over the list and code each of the twelve items using the following coding system:

$ = Costs more than $10 each time you do it.

R = Involves risk (either physical, intellectual, or emotional)

P or A = Use "P" for things you prefer to do with people; use "A" for things you prefer to do alone.

S or PL = Use "S" for things you do spontaneously; use "PL" for things you prefer to plan in advance.

3. Go down your list once more and note the date when you last did each one.

	$	R	P/A	S/PL	Last Time I Did This
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					

Think about the activities you listed in the "Twelve Things I Like to Do" exercise. What skills are required to carry out the particular activity? Skills used with information, people, and things may be described in three broad groups: ***knowledge skills***, ***personal skills***, and ***experience skills***. A helpful way for you to begin identifying your knowledge, personal, and experience skills is to complete sentences that begin with "*I know*," "*I am*," and "*I can*." For example, you might say, "I know accounting"; "I am organized"; or "I can sew." In other words, "I know" skills reflect your knowledge, "I am" skills describe your personal characteristics, and "I can" skills come from your experiences. Often the older woman has developed a combination of skills over a lifetime of diverse personal roles, volunteer work, and paid employment that would qualify her for a job she has not previously held nor been formally trained to consider. One way to define your skills is to look at your accomplishments and understand how you have achieved them. Whether they were everyday accomplishments, such as baking a cake, or major accomplishments, such as raising $10,000

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for a charity, you have used many skills together to complete the more complex task. An effective self-assessment of skills helps you identify unique combinations of skills you can transfer to specific jobs to make you competitive even in the most challenging job market.

Skill Groups

Remember, the skills we use with information, people, and things can be described in terms of:

- What I know . . .
- What I am . . .
- What I can do . . .

The following example is designed to help you begin to identify job skills gained from nonpaid work.

Ann has no paid work experience, although she has done her job well as a household manager. She moved with her three children and former husband several times in their 30 years of family life. Each move entailed coordinating arrangements with a moving company, supervising movers, taking inventory, disposing of unwanted items, scheduling, and holding garage sales. Details of moving were left to Ann. She liked advertising and negotiating the sale of their homes and going to new towns to find a place to live that was suitable for their needs. An important part of managing their moves was identifying a good school system for the children. Ann involved herself in the parent-teacher organizations at the schools, often serving as a committee member, homeroom mother, and newspaper editor.

Knowledge skills can be related to a variety of job opportunities. For example, flower arrangement is used by florists, hotels, catering services, gift shops, and others.

SKILLS ANN HAS DEMONSTRATED:

I know skills	*I am skills*	*I can skills*
Accounting	Adaptable	Coordinate
Child care	Attentive to detail	Communicate
Financial planning	Confident	Delegate
Geography	Diplomatic	Examine
Secretarial procedures	Resourceful	Monitor
Real estate	Organized	Negotiate
Writing	Enthusiastic	Supervise
Editing		Make decisions

You probably share some of Ann's experiences and skills. Now, look at the partial skills lists on pages 7-9 and begin thinking about job skills you have gained from your life experiences. You will want to add skills that apply particularly to you.

PARTIAL SKILLS LIST — Knowledge Skills

"I know..."

Accounting	Customs	Literature
Architecture	Decorating	Medicine
Art	Etiquette	Music
Auto mechanics	Fashion	Political process
Ballet	Film making	Punctuation
Baseball	Financial planning	Secretarial procedures
Basketball	First aid	
Biology	Flower arrangement	Sociology
Bookkeeping	Football	Spanish
Botany	French	Spelling
Child care	Geography	Stage production
Community resources	Grammar	Statistics
Computers	Health care	Tax law
Cosmetology	History	TV production
Current events	Law	Word processing

Others:

Personal skills help you work with customers, other employees, and management. They are related to our work productivity and job satisfaction.

PARTIAL SKILLS LIST — Personal Skills
"I am..."

Adaptable	Friendly	Positive
Aggressive	Generous	Practical
Attentive to detail	Good-natured	Precise
Calm	Gracious	Punctual
Candid	Hard-working	Realistic
Careful	Honest	Reasonable
Cheerful	Humorous	Reliable
Competitive	Imaginative	Resourceful
Confident	Independent	Responsible
Cooperative	Industrious	Sensitive
Creative	Intelligent	Sincere
Curious	Loyal	Sociable
Dependable	Methodical	Spontaneous
Diplomatic	Objective	Stable
Discreet	Optimistic	Tactful
Dynamic	Organized	Thorough
Efficient	Outgoing	Thoughtful
Energetic	Patient	Trustworthy
Enthusiastic	Perceptive	Vigorous
Flexible	Polite	Warm

Others:

_____ _____

_____ _____

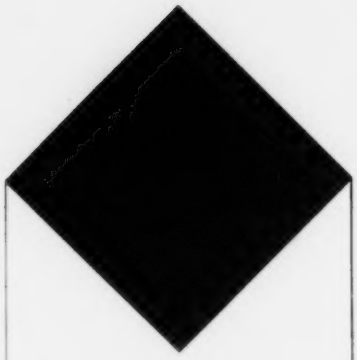
_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____



Experience skills are used to communicate to employers your fit with particular jobs. "I can" skills are put on resumes. You can transfer your experience skills from one job to another.

PARTIAL SKILLS LIST — Experience Skills
"I can..."

Adapt	Evaluate	Paint
Administer	Examine	Perform
Advise	Execute	Persuade
Analyze	Experiment	Plan
Arrange	Facilitate	Prioritize
Assign	File	Problem solve
Bargain	Forecast	Promote
Check	Guide	Purchase
Coach	Help	Reason
Collect	Hire	Recommend
Communicate	Identify	Record
Compute	Illustrate	Repair
Construct	Initiate	Restore
Cook	Institute	Review
Coordinate	Interpret	Revise
Create	Inventory	Screen
Dance	Launch	Serve
Decide	Lead	Sew
Define	Lecture	Summarize
Delegate	Listen	Supervise
Demonstrate	Make decisions	Tabulate
Design	Map	Teach
Diagnose	Mediate	Team Build
Direct	Moderate	Test
Distribute	Monitor	Train
Draft	Motivate	Travel
Draw	Navigate	Use computers
Edit	Negotiate	Write

Others:

You have developed skills over a lifetime of working with information, people, and things. You work with facts and figures, interact in groups and with customers, and use machines and tools. The next section focuses on looking at your achievements to determine more skills you possess.

Assessing Your Life Experiences

Your life experiences comprise a rich source of information about you. Whether as a result of former jobs, school, childhood and family experiences, volunteer activities, leisure pursuits, or any other activity, these experiences are things you did well and enjoyed doing. Analyzing your most significant experiences can help identify patterns of skills that have previously contributed to your sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. The same skills and knowledge should be considered when you evaluate your future job possibilities.

Selecting experiences for self-assessment is often a challenging process. Experiences that yield the best information are those in which you were an active agent. In other words, you will want to assess events when:

- you were the main person involved;
- the activity was action oriented; and
- there was some recognizable outcome.

Most important of all, the outcome was satisfying to you whether those around you considered it significant or not. The experiences you select should be ones that brought you a sense of self-worth and satisfaction.

A word of caution: Because you are identifying experiences over a lifetime, it is easy to dismiss an experience as trivial. However, if you felt the activity was indeed an achievement at the time, it is worthy of consideration. The following examples of experiences are provided to assist you:

- Learned to play the guitar
- Headed the Neighborhood Watch Program
- Raised three children on my own
- Learned to speak French
- Relocated my family five times in ten years
- Had a part in a play at the community center
- Added a redwood deck to the house
- Set up and managed a new branch office
- Learned to ride a bike
- Set up a computerized inventory system for five area stores
- President of the PTA
- Cared for elderly parents for ten years
- Worked as hospital volunteer
- Redecorated entire house alone
- Organized a children's play group
- Learned to throw pottery
- Organized a charity bazaar
- Made arrangements for three weddings
- Coached grandson's soccer team
- Schoolroom mother for 14 years

Activity: Narrating Experiences

Think of an example of an activity, achievement, or event of which you are proud, or about which you feel good. It should be an experience in which you were an active agent and received satisfaction and a sense of success. (Winning the lottery does not count!) Do not be concerned about whether the activity, achievement, or event may seem trivial to someone else. What matters is that you did something that gave you a sense of enjoyment, satisfaction, accomplishment, or self-worth. The activity, achievement, or event could have occurred at any time in your life. It can involve school, family, social, civic, volunteer, leisure, work, or any other aspect of your life. Choose your example so that:

- you are the main person involved;
- it is action oriented; and
- there is some recognizable outcome.

Be sure you are the person taking action in your example.

Write your example and describe what you did just as you did it—step by step. Write as though you are explaining to a young child. After writing your example, go over it and underline or highlight every skill you can identify. After identifying your skills, compile a list of all the skills you used at the bottom of the page.

MY EXPERIENCE:

SKILLS USED:

Activity: Recognizing Business Skills Acquired Through Volunteering

Often, women do not recognize the business skills they use in volunteer roles. For instance:

Bonnie, 62 years old, confided to an employment counselor that she had no skills and had never worked outside the home. In the course of the conversation, however, she told the counselor she held various volunteer positions. She was a Girl Scout leader, service unit cookie manager, and service unit chairperson. She had also served on several councilwide committees including as chair of the council recognition committee and chair of the annual meeting committee for a Girl Scout council.

Bonnie recalled her biggest accomplishment was raising $800,000 as chairperson of the council cookie sale. She also recruited councilwide committee members, conducted meetings, established council goals, reviewed existing cookie sale procedures and systems, and modified systems to improve collection and communication. Under her management, sales were up by 11 percent over the previous year.

She coordinated efforts with council staff and cookie company representatives; recruited three area cookie chairpersons; trained 30 service unit managers; communicated with area chairpersons, council committees, and the board of directors; organized a kickoff luncheon for 200 people; made promotional presentations at area meetings, service unit meetings, and community groups such as Rotary, United Way, and the city council; and was interviewed for local radio and television talk shows during the cookie sale. She consolidated area reports for weekly, councilwide press releases and kept track of cookie sales, comparing them with council goals.

1. If you were the counselor, would you agree that Bonnie had no skills?

2. If you were Bonnie, how would you communicate your skills to a potential employer?

3. What thoughts about your own past activities and skills does Bonnie's case trigger that you would want to share in an interview and on a resume? List those skills now.

Activity: My Skills Chart

By now, you are probably beginning to see how the skills you have been using as a homemaker and volunteer can be transferred to a job outside the home. The following exercise will help you to further clarify the specific skills you have.

1. On a separate sheet of paper, make a list of your most satisfying experiences. These experiences need not be major ones in the eyes of the world but should be important to you.
2. Now list the activities and skills you used to complete the job. For example, to bake a cake, you followed a set of instructions, measured ingredients, and used creativity in decorating.

3. Select ten special experiences and enter them across the top of My Skills Chart on page 15.

4. Down the left side of the Skills Chart, list 15 skills that are relevant to your life experiences. (Use the skill lists you completed earlier as a guide.)

5. Now, working the columns vertically, put a check mark beside every skill that you used to complete the accomplishment listed at the top.

6. Go back and blacken the square that represents the one skill that was most important in successfully carrying out the accomplishment.

7. Select the second most vital skill you used and blacken half of that square.

8. Total the points horizontally for each skill. Count three points for each black square, two points for each half-blackened square, and one point for each check. (The Sample Skills Chart on page 14 provides an example.) The skills that receive noticeably higher scores are the strengths you want to sell to the employer.

Source: Cynthia Friedlander as cited by Eleanor Berman in "The New MBA (Motherhood Is a Business Asset)," Family Circle, 2/21/89.

Sample Skills Chart

Skills	Accomplishments							
	Plant Garden	Teach Piano	Scout Leader	Plan Trip	Buy Auto	Train Dog	Learn Spanish	Score*
Administer			✓	✓	✓			3
Communicate		◢	◢		◢		◢	(9)
Create	✓		✓	✓				3
Delegate			✓					1
Design	◢			✓				3
Finger/Hand Dexterity	✓	✓	✓					3
Guide		✓	✓			✓		3
Organize		✓	✓	◢	✓			5
Lead			✓			✓		2
Mediate			✓		■			4
Plan	■	✓	■	■		✓	◢	(15)
Supervise			✓					1
Train		✓	✓			■		5
Teach		■	✓				◢	(6)
Visualize	✓			✓			✓	3

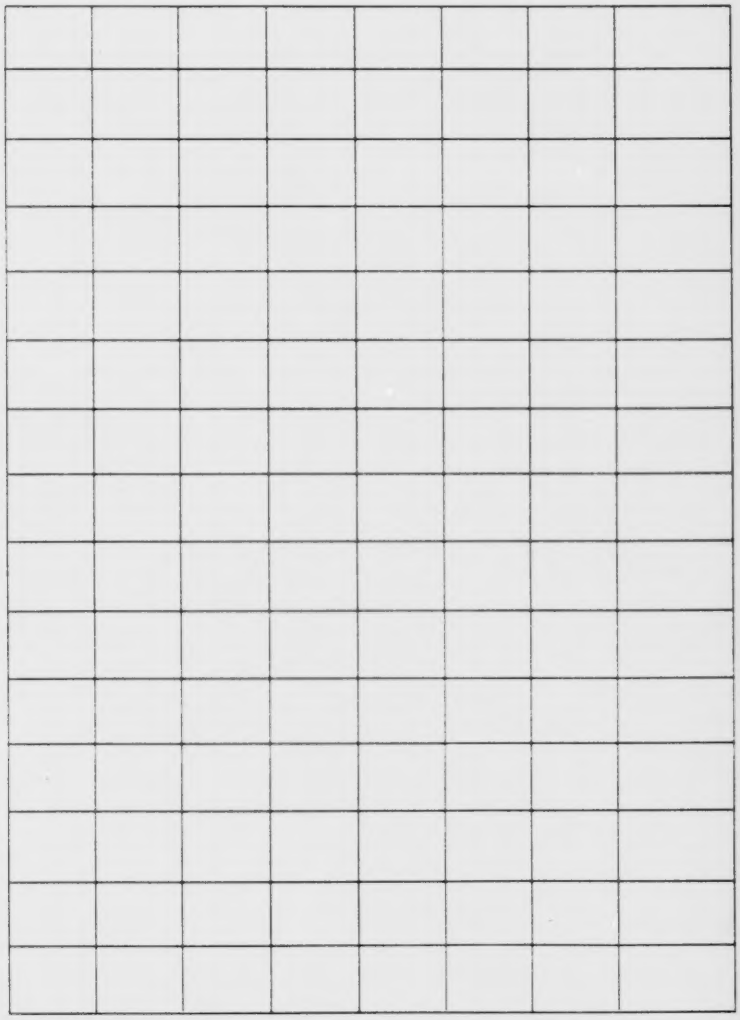
*Check = 1 point = Skill used in accomplishment
Half-blackened square = 2 points = Second most important skill
Blackened square = 3 points = Most vital skill used

You will use this information in designing a one-page resume.

My Skills Chart

Skills **Accomplishments**

Score*



*Check = 1 point = Skill used in accomplishment
Half-blackened square = 2 points = Second most important skill
Blackened square = 3 points = Most vital skill used

You will use this information in designing a one-page resume.

Matching Your Skills With Employer's Needs

Women with little or no paid work experience often wonder who would pay them for what they know. Many do not think they should be paid to do things they enjoy. These women need to know they can and should be both well paid and happy in their work!

Activity: Matching Household Skills With Employers

Finding employers interested in the things you enjoy doing can be as easy as looking through the Yellow Pages of your local directory. See how this technique works for Betsy, in the case below, and then try it for yourself.

After reading the case, list the skills displayed in Betsy's homemaking activities. Match her skills to employers who might pay for those skills. Then use the Yellow Pages of your phone directory to identify specific employers in your community who match the generic employers you have listed. The example on page 17 illustrates the process.

Betsy

Betsy is a homemaker whose husband provided the primary financial support until he died when she was 62 years old. They lived in a rural area. She has numerous household skills—washing, gardening, ironing, cooking, sewing, and taking care of animals. Occasionally, she has volunteered—baking for the church and reading to the elderly. Betsy likes home chores but has to provide for her own financial support now.

Now that you have seen an example of how homemaking skills can be matched with employer's needs, generate a list of your own, matching your skills with generic and local employers.

Matching Household Skills with Employers

Homemaking Skill and/or Interest	Generic Employer	Local Employer
washing	cleaners	choice cleaners
	laundromats	
	nursing homes	
	hospital	
	child care centers	
Gardening	garden centers	
	produce dept.	
Cooking	restaurants	
	school districts	
	nutrition programs	
Reading	bookstores	

Matching Household Skills with Employers

Homemaking Skill and/or Interest	Generic Employer	Local Employer

Hurdles to Clear on the Way to Your Employment Goal

Most people recognize they must overcome certain barriers in order to attain the right job. Potential barriers include anything that slows your progress to that goal, including lack of training, labor market trends, age and sex discrimination, lack of experience, and personal attitudes. Barriers can be real or perceived. For example, a community with high unemployment presents a challenge to even the most determined job seeker and represents a barrier over which the job seeker has little direct control. You might believe that no one would hire you if your skills are outdated or if you have never held a paying job. This belief might keep you from seeking training or even applying for jobs. That perception is an important barrier, regardless of whether you are right or wrong.

The following chart contains two different kinds of barriers, those over which we have some control and those beyond our direct influence

Most people find many of their employment barriers are self-imposed restrictions. Although self-doubt is normal, it is important to remember that successful job seekers emphasize what they can do, not what they cannot.

BARRIERS

Personal Control	*External Control*
■ Appearance	■ Social Security earning limitations
■ Outdated skills	■ Age, sex, or race discrimination
■ Training	■ Stereotyping
■ Attitude	■ Community economy
■ Access to transportation	■ Labor trends
■ Care-giving responsibilities	■ Care-giving resources

Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

Once you have identified your barriers, you can begin to consider ways to overcome them. The 14 possible employment barriers that follow have been identified by midlife and older workers. For each barrier, information for your consideration is presented along with potential approaches or strategies to overcome the barrier. Considerations and strategies are presented briefly and are not intended to represent the only appropriate approaches for each barrier.

1. *Barrier*: "Older workers cannot compete with younger workers."

   Consideration: The older person brings many skills and experiences that younger people have not yet acquired. Companies that do hire midlife and older workers consider these workers productive.

   Strategy: Communicate your quality, experience, skill, and commitment.

2. *Barrier*: Companies want to promote an image of a young, mobile staff. "We are a young company of young people."

   Consideration: America's work force is growing older. In 1996, the first Baby Boomers will turn 50. Furthermore, because of a drop in the birth rate during the 1960s, employers are experiencing a shortage of young people entering the job pool. More and more, employers will be trying to recruit and retain older workers. Not all employers recognize this fact yet (although many do), but they will have to face it eventually. Also, a statement such as "We are a young company with young people," implies you will not be hired because you are older, and is illegal under federal law.

   Strategy: Emphasize your assets, maturity, experience, judgment, etc. Communicate your ability to work with diverse groups of people. Communicate your enjoyment in working with people of all ages; stress that you are challenged by learning. A "young" company can provide stimulating opportunities for everyone.

3. *Barrier*: "Mature workers increase costs to the employer."

   Consideration: Studies indicate older workers are more productive because of their skill and experience, have less absenteeism, and are more stable. A 1989 study by the Consolidated Consulting Group found that the differences between the health insurance cost of younger and older workers were not enough to be a major factor in employment decisions. Companies surveyed that employ midlife and older workers were satisfied with their cost-effectiveness.

   Strategy: Stress the contributions you bring to the employer. Emphasize skill and experience and your stable work record. Counter any negative comment about insurance costs with positive information about the overall cost-effectiveness of midlife and older workers.

4. *Barrier*: "Older workers are rigid, not as adaptable, slow to learn, and have shorter job longevity."

   Consideration: This stereotype is not supported by facts. Surveys of employers who have hired midlife and older workers consistently express satisfaction with their performance. Older workers stay on the job longer and do not tend to "job hop" for upward mobility.

   Strategy: Communicate your excellent work record, express a desire to learn, indicate your commitment to continued work.

5. *Barrier*: Earnings limitations related to Social Security benefits and/or pensions restrict employment possibilities.

   Consideration: Earnings limitations do exist. Labor Department projections

show substantial increases in part-time employment over the next 20 years. Increased part-time opportunities, however, are compatible with earnings restrictions.

Strategy: Estimate your desired income level. Seek part-time work that complements retirement income. Part-time opportunities include job-sharing (splitting a full-time job with another person), seasonal work (working only during peak seasons such as during holiday times), and redesign of former positions (such as splitting one position into two separate positions), etc. Remember, if you qualify for a company pension and delay retirement beyond age 65, your pension benefit will be larger when you do retire.

6. *Barrier*: The demands of advanced technology complicate the job search.

   Consideration: The demands of advancing technology for specialized workers, the health of the economy, and competitive pressures are affecting employment possibilities for all age groups. Retraining every 5 years is a reality for everyone. Older workers are being hired in high technology organizations especially those who have received training.

   Strategy: Make the necessary adjustments. Consider retraining. Stay flexible. Remember that people of all ages can learn and grow.

7. *Barrier*: Your previous employer terminated you.

   Consideration: Companies will not release information relating to your job performance unless you give written permission.

   Strategy: Be honest. If this topic arises, say as many positive things about the former position as possible. Use references from people who have worked with you and are aware of your skills and contributions. Stress that you have learned how important it is that the job fit your special interests and skills. Communicate that the job for which you are applying gives you that opportunity.

8. *Barrier*: Physical limitations restrict your job opportunities.

   Consideration: Determine exactly the relationship of your physical limitations to daily work. Many job opportunities exist for those even with severe physical disabilities.

   Strategy: Apply for jobs where your physical limitations can be accommodated. Emphasize ability over disability. Suggest creative adaptations to your work environment to indicate your ability. Adaptations may be simple, such as changing a chair, better lighting, and frequent breaks. Suggest creative solutions.

9. *Barrier*: Care-giving to a frail family member restricts available time for employment.

   Consideration: Support services exist in most communities to help you with care-giving. To locate available services, such as adult day care, meals, sitters, and home health care, contact your State Unit on Aging, the Area Agency on Aging, and local senior centers. Locally, services and providers may vary in title (for example, county senior services, senior information services, health aides, respite care, and senior companion programs).

   Strategy: Research your community. Arrange for support and then apply for jobs that fit your time requirements, or look for employment that allows you to work at home. Consider flexible work schedules, weekends, and evenings.

10. *Barrier*: Little or no means of transportation is available.

    Consideration: Most communities have diverse transportation options. Information may be obtained from county aging services, religious and social services,

human services, libraries, or city offices. Mass transportation, cab companies, and rural transportation authorities may provide discounts or free transportation to persons of a certain age. Also, car pool arrangements may be a possibility.

Strategy: Research local options before you begin the interview process. Avoid mentioning transportation problems in interviews.

11. *Barrier*: Family/peer pressure complicates your employment decision.

    Consideration: All families and support groups are different. Concern for an individual is expressed in a variety of ways, from total support in seeking employment to expectations that employment is negative and potentially harmful.

    Strategy: Think through your decisions. Communicate with those around you your positive desire to work. If possible, discuss the importance of work and the needs of your family and friends. Be willing to do what is right for you.

12. *Barrier*: Personal fears and insecurities weaken your self-confidence.

    Consideration: Throughout our lives we experience fears and insecurities. They represent normal responses to a variety of situations. People can learn to deal with their fears and insecurities.

    Strategy: Identify support groups in your local community such as AARP, women's organizations, and religious groups. Begin your job search with a plan. Reward yourself frequently.

13. *Barrier*: Lack of education or training or absence from the job market hinders your employability.

    Consideration: Skills are developed through all life experiences, not just formal education, training, or the job market. Community colleges, trade schools, and other specialty educators can help you update your skills or retrain.

    Strategy: Identify skills you have developed through diverse experiences. Identify those skills that need updating and sources to provide such training. Communicate to any employer that you have taken the time and effort to learn.

14. *Barrier*: Your wardrobe is limited for an interview and employment.

    Consideration: With a modest investment you can expand your current wardrobe to include appropriate interview and employment dress.

    Strategy: Shop sales, discount stores, and resale stores. Give life to an old outfit with a new accessory. Emphasize fit and ease of care. Buy basics, such as a dark suit and two or three coordinating blouses.

Activity: Barriers to Successful Employment

The following two cases are designed to expand your thinking about strategies for overcoming possible employment barriers. Read about Florence and Yolanda and try to identify both the self-imposed and external barriers they encountered. Develop possible strategies that Florence and Yolanda might use to overcome these barriers.

Florence

Florence worked in dry cleaning establishments off and on for more than 40 years. In between her working years, she raised three children and is now the primary caretaker of her 13-year-old grandson. In the small college town where she now lives, there are no opportunities available in dry cleaning; but Social Security does not provide enough income for herself and her grandson. She is 70 years old and does not think she can learn a new trade. Besides, she thinks, "What employer would even give me a chance at my age?" She suffers with arthritic knees but never misses a day driving to the post office for

her mail. She has steady hands and patience for tedious tasks. She knows she would be a loyal employee to an employer who will risk hiring a 70-year-old woman.

Yolanda

After working 30 years in a Dallas hospital, Yolanda resigned from her job after she was denied time off from work to deal with a serious family crisis. Yolanda feels she was pushed out. The hospital not only denied her leave but wanted her to get a degree, which she felt she could not handle at her age. Management also asked her to take on the work of three people. Additionally, the hospital initiated a program of early retirement for employees over 55. Those who refused were eventually terminated for one reason or another. The hospital could then hire someone else with less experience at a lower salary.

Yolanda did well financially for awhile, but she has nearly depleted all of her resources. She is bored with TV soaps, and sitting home without a job makes her feel as though she will "go crazy." Her family worries about her being depressed and has been very supportive of her job-search efforts.

Yolanda feels that she has much to offer an employer and that she still can work as hard as any younger person. She does not want to work for minimum wage when she sees many younger people getting $8 or $9 an hour. She has been looking for a job through a senior worker program she heard about on a television commercial. She believes that senior citizens are limited by Social Security and that there should be a service with little or no fee to help place job seekers like herself.

Florence

Barriers	Check One: Self-Imposed	Check One: External

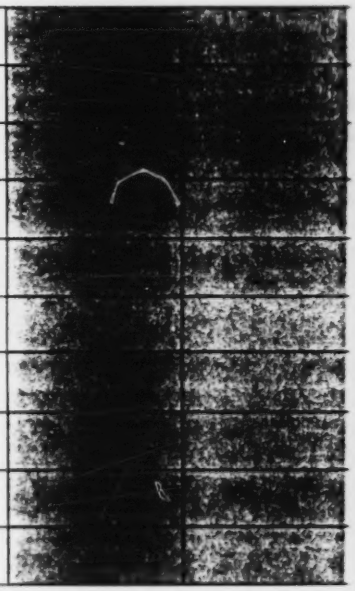
What have I learned?

1. What possible strategies can I suggest to Florence for her job search?

2. What barriers do I face in my own job search? What strategies can I use to overcome them?

Yolanda

Barriers	Check One: Self-Imposed	Check One: External



What have I learned?

1. What possible strategies can I suggest to Yolanda for her job search?

2. What barriers do I face in my own job search? What strategies can I use to overcome them?

What barriers do you face in your job search? What strategies can you use to overcome these barriers?

Barriers	Strategies

Now that you have identified your skills and developed strategies for recognizing and overcoming possible employment barriers, you are ready to begin preparing to present your skills to potential employers.

EFFECTIVE WRITTEN MATERIALS

Effective written materials communicate your skills, experience, and other qualifications to your greatest advantage. Your resume, cover letter, thank-you letter, and application form should send a clear, positive, and consistent message concerning who you are. All these pieces should work together to convey to the reader that you are the person he or she needs to get the job done well.

Your Resume

A resume is a well-prepared description of your accomplishments, skills, and experiences written to address the needs and goals of a potential employer. A resume alone will not get you a job, but it does act as a calling card and can help you get that all-important interview. You need to develop a basic format for your resume and then tailor it to meet the unique needs of each job for which you apply. Try to read your resume from the employer's point of view. Is your experience presented as a good match for the job? Is your resume persuasive enough to get you an interview?

Midlife and older workers, people changing career fields, and those entering or reentering the job market after a lengthy absence should use the resume as a memory jogger more often than as a calling card. That is, you should attempt to meet potential employers first through research and contacts. After an initial interview, send a resume tailored to that job as a way of reinforcing your qualifications and of reminding the employer that you are available.

Types of Resumes

Four basic resume formats are available to the job seeker: functional, chronological, combination functional/chronological, and a modified letter/resume.

The Functional Resume: A functional resume emphasizes the applicant's work objectives, skills, and accomplishments. It enables you to tailor information specifically to a desired job. Your experience and accomplishments are grouped according to your skills. The functional resume has the advantage of highlighting skills and deemphasizing work experience. A sample list of functional areas you might use include the following:

Sample Functional Areas for a Functional Resume

Administration
Analysis
Auditing
Bookkeeping
Communications
Community Organizing
Computer Use
Consulting
Contract Administration
Coordination
Counseling
Curriculum Development
Customer and Client Relations/Service
Data Analysis
Data Collection/Entry
Designing
Editing
Engineering
Evaluation
Facilitating
Financial Research/Planning/Analysis
Forecasting
Fund Raising
Human Resource Management
Interpreting
Interviewing
Inventory Control
Management
Marketing
Media Relations
Mediation
Merchandising
Negotiation
Nursing
Office Support
Operations Analysis
Organizational Development Planning
Problem Solving
Product Presentation/Demonstration
Production
Program Development Analysis
Project Coordination Administration/ Management
Promotion
Public Relations
Public Speaking
Purchasing
Quality Control/Assurance
Record Keeping
Reporting
Research
Sales
Special Events Planning
Staff Development
Supervision
Systems Analysis/Design
Team Building
Training
Writing

The functional resume is most frequently used by new entrants into the job market, by those who are reentering after a long absence, or by people making a career change. The functional resume combines information on skills and accomplishments relative to activities such as homemaking, volunteer work, and hobbies.

If you select the functional resume style, be aware that an employer may be interested in seeing your chronological work history. If asked, be prepared to provide this information. Sample functional resumes are located on pages 29-30.

Terry Kosley
820 Meadow Lane
Colorado Springs, CO 80819
(819) 598-7580

OBJECTIVE: Position in adult care in private home or small day-care center

SKILLS:

Care-giving:

- Cared for bedridden patient in private home for eight years
- Maintained daily medication records
- Read to patients as a storyteller for a nursing home
- Delivered Meals on Wheels twice a week for three years
- Administered and monitored multiple dosages of medication
- Assisted wheelchair passenger on numerous trips using public and private transportation

Communication:

- Coordinated 24-hour care for elderly relative in nursing home for more than two years
- Consulted with contractors adapting private homes for adults with special needs
- Counseled older adults, clarifying their problems and needs
- Coordinated communication among support services for aging couple

REFERENCES: Available upon request

Anna Smith
432 Rock Canyon Road
Lawrence, OK 73150
(918) 530-3019

JOB OBJECTIVE: Managerial Trainee

SKILLS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Chaired meetings of 25 leaders/managers
- Developed agenda for quarterly meetings
- Administered daily activities of volunteer rural emergency services
- Obtained and scheduled speakers and films for community center
- Maintained disbursement and receipt records for annual fund raiser with revenue in excess of $20,000

COMMUNICATION

- Composed grant requests for rural emergency services
- Led youth group weekend retreats
- Tutored children with reading difficulties
- Spoke before groups of 200 regarding educational matters
- Conducted telephone surveys assessing emergency services

PLANNING

- Arranged and escorted motorcoach trips
- Developed calendar of events for senior community center
- Developed weekly lesson plans for church school
- Set personal yearly goals

EDUCATION:

Attended Tulsa Junior College, completing Interpersonal and Organizational Communication, Business English, Management, Accounting I and II, and other classes

References available upon request

The Chronological Resume: A traditional chronological resume lists your work experiences in reverse chronological order, that is, beginning with your most recent job. It should include the dates of employment, names of employers, your job title, and duties or responsibilities. Other information, such as education, publications, awards, and hobbies can also be included if relevant.

The traditional chronological resume tells people what you have done, where, when, and for whom. It is best used when you have a consistent, progressive work history and want to continue in the same field. If you are changing fields, or have a sparse or sporadic work history, you should probably consider using a different kind of resume. A sample chronological resume is located on page 32.

The Combination Resume: A combination resume combines elements of the functional and chronological resumes to provide employers with needed historical information. This resume style gives you the opportunity to highlight your skills and accomplishments rather than merely list your job titles, duties, and responsibilities. It focuses on what you can do and how you can do it, rather than on just when you did it and for whom.

Even if you are planning to stay in the same field, a combination resume may be the best way to communicate effectively about yourself. The combination resume enables you to select and focus on those skills, interests, and experiences that relate most closely to the job that interests you and eliminate or minimize those items of information that do not reinforce your work objective. Select those factors that will help you communicate about yourself most effectively. A sample combination resume is located on page 33 .

The Modified Letter/Resume: You may use a modified letter/resume (also called a broadcast letter) for targeted mailings to specific kinds of employers. Writing in letter style rather than resume form, you emphasize details about accomplishments and skills while still keeping the letter/resume to one page. To use the modified letter/resume, identify employers you would be interested in working for (for example, a gift shop owner or local physician), send a copy of your modified letter/resume to the employer, and follow with a phone call a few days later requesting an interview.

This approach may be particularly usefu for someone who is trying to switch career fields, who is entering the job market for the first time, or who is reentering the job market after a long absence. Bypassing a formal resume enables you to address questions about your background and experience (or lack of it) during the interview. A sample of a modified letter/resume is located on page 34.

Frances Winchell
4938 East 39th Street
Owensboro, KY 42301
(502) 402-7392

JOB TARGET:
Assistant food service manager in a health care facility.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

*** 1982 to Present Jenkins School District, Jenkins, KY
Cafeteria Supervisor

Supervised twelve employees. Selected and appropriately priced interesting menu items. Directed cleaning of the kitchen and dining areas.

*** 1974 to 1981 Comptex Plant, Owensboro, KY
Supervisor and Snack Food Worker

Solved routine problems such as food or staff shortages and staff utilization. Evaluated performance of fourteen cafeteria workers. Took orders and operated cash register.

*** 1968 to 1974 Longview Hospital, Louisville, KY
Cook

Gathered and prepared food. Maintained hospital and government sanitation standards. Worked morning and evening shifts.

*** 1966 to 1968 Sunrise Doughnuts, Louisville, KY
Waitress/Cashier

Took orders, served customers, set and cleared tables, prepared itemized checks, accepted payments.

RELEVANT TRAINING:

1987 to Present Owensboro Vocational Tech

Classes in accounting, management, food planning and preparation, and nutrition.

REFERENCES: Provided upon request.

Ruth Jordan
1035 South Walnut
Miami, FL 69103

Home: (305) 639-4093 or Message: (305) 346-0854

OBJECTIVE: Commercial property management

AREAS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

Contract Negotiations
- o Leased and rented commercial property. Attracted and retained professional tenants, maintaining 90 percent occupancy over three-year period.
- o Negotiated the development of a $1 million-dollar parcel of commercial land.

Facility Management
- o Selected facility site and supervised office move for 75 personnel.
- o Formulated and directed continuing preventative maintenance program to maintain property values in excess of $1.5 million. Designed security plan. Arranged for maintenance and upkeep.

Insurance Sales
- o Sold casualty, fire, and automobile policies. Consistently met or exceeded quotas set by upper management. Named Company Salesman of the Year.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

LOWELL & ASSOCIATES	
Account Representative	1981 - Present
EVERGLADES PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES	
Maintenance and Security Manager	1960 - 1965
Leasing Agent	1956 - 1960
ADVANTAGE AGENCY	
Insurance Agent	1965 - 1981

EDUCATION:

BBA - University of Miami, Florida
Wharton School of Business, Real Estate Investment Analysis
Hartford School of Insurance, Connecticut

ASSOCIATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS:

Rotary Club of Miami
International Society of Financiers
Mortgage Bankers Association

REFERENCES FURNISHED UPON REQUEST

4802 South Lewis
Washington, DC 20090
(202) 933-8742

Mr. Ted Bloom
Heritage Antiques
2990 M Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20038

Dear Mr. Bloom:

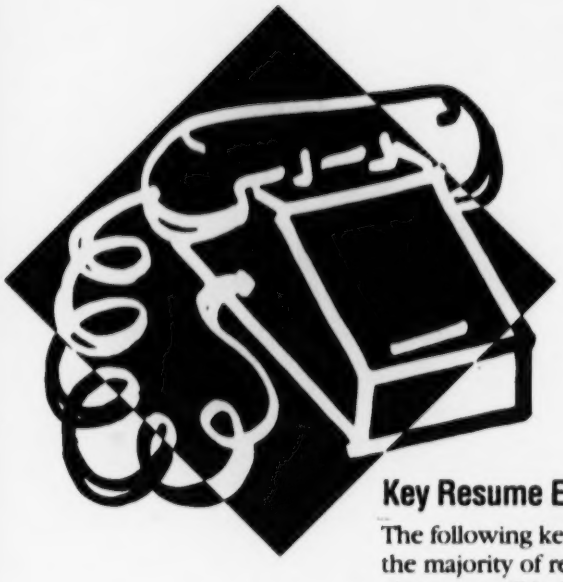
Your current opening for a sales associate is very interesting, and my background and experience make me an ideal candidate for the position. I have a unique blend of experience in private industry and retailing combined with a long-term interest in antiques. As a result I have the following skills and accomplishments that relate to your organization:

- o Acted as liaison between a sales force of eight and a variety of customers.
- o Organized a community benefit antique auction of 250 pieces valued at more than $50,000.
- o Researched and acquired more than 50 Early American period pieces.
- o Managed all inventory control procedures at three plant locations.
- o Analyzed, interpreted, and corrected more than fifteen corporate general ledger accounts.
- o Maintained payroll records for up to 100 employees.
- o Interviewed and trained a clerical staff of twelve.

I am excited about the prospect of working at a quality store with a clientele that shares my enthusiasm and interst in antiques. I will call you next Wednesday to see when we can meet for an interview.

Sincerely yours,

Jamie Ervin



Key Resume Elements

The following key elements are included in the majority of resumes. Consider which elements will help you to communicate most effectively about yourself.

1. *Contact Information*: Always include your full name, address, and telephone number. Place contact information at the top of the page in large, bold type.

2. *Accomplishments/Skills Listing*: Describe accomplishments most closely relating to your occupational objective. In describing your accomplishments, specify the skills you used in achieving them. Include any relevant nonpaid accomplishments such as those connected with homemaking, volunteer activities, or hobbies. It is not necessary to mention these were nonpaid activities. What is important is the accomplishment, the skills used in achieving the accomplishment, and how the accomplishment and skills relate to the work objective.

   Be brief, be results oriented, and stick to the essentials. Be as specific as possible about results; provide facts and figures, such as "increased sales 50 percent in six months."

3. *Work Experience*: In this section list jobs you have held in reverse chronological order—starting with the most recent or the most relevant. For each job, list your job title, your employer's company name and address (you need to include only the city, not the full address), and your duties, responsibilities, skills, and accomplishments. Include your nonpaid work experience here as well. Include the dates of your employment if you have had steady long-term employment. Leave out employment dates if there are gaps in your employment history. If you have an extensive work history you may wish to select those jobs that most closely reinforce your current work objective, rather than including a long list of jobs.

4. *Education. College Background*: List your most relevant education or training first. Generally, list education in reverse chronological order, starting with your highest degree. List the names of the schools you attended, but do not list the dates of attendance. Include honors, scholarships, or extracurricular activities only if they are relevant to the job you are seeking.

   High School Background: Although a high school diploma or progress toward a high school diploma is important, usually only your college background or specific training is listed on your resume. The number of years of school you completed and GED certification are often noted on application forms. Also, list any special training, workshops, or seminars you have taken that relate to your work objective.

5. *Other Information*: You may want to include separate sections for other information that is pertinent but does not fit another resume category. Foreign language proficiencies, volunteer activities, hobbies, special skills, memberships in professional organizations, and lists of publications may be useful additions to your resume if—and only if—they are relevant to the job you are seeking. It is not appropriate to include health, family, or other unrelated information.

6. *References*: Do not list any references on your resume. Simply indicate that "References are available upon request." *Upon request* keeps your resume short, allows you to select references that relate most

closely to the specific job, and minimizes the number of times your references will be contacted to provide the same information. You should type a list of the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your references on a separate sheet of paper to give to potential employers upon request. You should always take a list of references to an employment interview.

Guidelines for Resume Preparation

No magic formula ensures a perfect resume, but adhering to the following basic guidelines will allow you to communicate about yourself in an effective manner.

Writing Style and Content

- Write clearly, concisely, and positively.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs.
- Write in a brief style.
- Start each sentence with a strong action word when describing your duties and accomplishments (for example, administered, organized, operated, achieved, managed, designed).

Action Words

The following list of action verbs can help you in writing the descriptions of your work experience for your resume.

Accelerated
Accomplished
Adapted
Adjusted
Administered
Advertised
Advised
Analyzed
Announced
Arranged
Assembled
Assisted
Attained
Balanced
Built
Calculated
Catalogued
Chaired
Changed
Collaborated
Communicated
Compared
Compiled
Completed
Computed
Conceptualized
Conducted
Consolidated
Constructed
Consulted
Contracted
Converted
Created
Defined
Delegated
Demonstrated
Deposited
Designed
Developed
Devised
Directed
Distributed
Drafted
Edited
Educated
Eliminated
Encouraged
Entertained
Established
Estimated
Evaluated
Examined
Executed
Expanded
Explained
Fabricated
Facilitated
Familiarized
Figured
Filed
Formulated
Founded
Generated
Grouped
Guided
Handled
Hired
Identified
Illustrated
Implemented
Improved
Improvised
Indexed
Influenced
Informed
Initiated
Innovated
Inspected
Installed
Instituted
Instructed
Integrated
Interviewed
Introduced
Invented
Investigated
Kept records
Launched
Led
Made
Maintained
Managed
Marketed
Moderated
Modified
Monitored
Motivated
Negotiated
Obtained
Operated
Ordered
Packed
Persuaded
Pioneered
Planned
Prepared
Presented
Presided
Processed
Produced
Programmed
Promoted
Proposed
Publicized
Recommended
Recorded
Recruited
Redesigned
Reduced
Referred
Related
Repaired
Reported
Researched
Restocked
Revised
Revitalized
Served
Set up
Shaped
Simplified
Sold
Solved
Sparked
Specified
Staffed
Stimulated
Streamlined
Strengthened
Stretched
Structured
Succeeded
Summarized
Surveyed
Synthesized
Systematized
Tested
Tracked
Traded
Trained
Transformed
Transmitted
Tripled
Typed
Uncovered
Unified
Unraveled
Upgraded
Used
Verified
Wrote

- Make statements that indicate how you have used your skills to solve problems.
- Be specific about accomplishments whenever possible (for example, raised $1500 for community programs by organizing a community walk-a-thon).
- Present strongest points first.
- Double-check your grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Have someone else check as well. Proofread carefully.
- Leave out salary requirements.
- Leave out anything negative. Make only positive statements about yourself.
- Leave out information that is not relevant.
- Leave out personal information such as age, sex, height, weight, marital status, health status, or number of dependents.

General Appearance

- Use white or light-colored, high-quality paper.
- Use the same paper stock for the cover letter and resume.
- Use standard 8-1/2" X 11" paper.
- Use one side of the paper only.
- Use bold type, CAPITAL LETTERS, *underlining*, and indention to emphasize key points.
- Balance the content on the page. Use wide margins and allow plenty of "white space" to avoid giving your resume a crowded look.
- Have your resume professionally typed, word processed, or typeset. A word processor allows you to tailor your resume to a specific employer easily.
- Reproduce copies using a high-quality printer or photocopier.
- Do not use gimmicks such as oddly sized or brightly colored paper, fancy typesetting, or special binding.

In general, your resume should be brief. The average resume is contained on a single page. It is acceptable, however, to use two pages if necessary. Sometimes a two-page resume is easier to read and more attractive than a one-page resume that is crowded with too much information. Your resume should never be more than two pages. One notable exception concerns academic resumes, known as vitae, which are much more comprehensive in scope. The most effective resumes are attractive, interesting, easy to read, neat, well organized, professional looking, and targeted to your objective.

Cover Letters

A cover letter should be sent with every resume you distribute. It is an integral part of your employment package. Essentially the cover letter announces your interest in, or inquires about, a position; allows you to highlight your most relevant skills, interests, and experiences; and gives you an opportunity to take control of the situation by saying when you will call for an appointment.

When you send a cover letter and resume to a prospective employer, direct your correspondence to the individual in charge of hiring for the job in which you are interested. You can learn the name of this person through your contacts or your research. If necessary, call the organization and ask for the name of the individual.

When responding to a blind ad that gives only a post office box number, use the salutations "Dear Employer" or "Ladies and Gentlemen." Avoid using "Dear Sir," "Gentlemen," "Madam," "To Whom It May Concern," or "Dear Sir/Madam."

Your cover letter should consist of three brief paragraphs. In the opening paragraph state your reason for writing, preferably in terms of what the employer needs. Let the employer know what you have to offer the organization and why you are interested in the position. If you have been referred by someone, give that person's name and title in this first paragraph. *Do not* begin with "Attached you will find a copy of my resume."

The second paragraph should draw attention to your resume. Indicate in this paragraph that you have enclosed your resume. Also, briefly highlight the details of your resume that should be most noteworthy to this particular employer. Provide some pertinent information that will make the reader think a conversation with you

would be valuable to his or her own professional interests.

In the final paragraph, indicate when you will contact the organization concerning a possible interview. Be sure to express your willingness and desire to schedule an interview at the earliest convenience. Include your phone number and suggest that the employer feel free to contact you at any time. A sample cover letter is located below.

August 13, 1990
10307 Avondale Drive
Carrolton, MI 33809

XYZ Publishing Company
P. O. Box 3209
Carrolton, MI 33817

Dear Manager:

I am very interested in your position of assistant sales manager advertised in The Herald. My experience and skills are well suited to the position.

As you can see by my enclosed resume, I have retail sales experience in a reputable clothing store and worked with a high degree of accuracy as a teller in a financial institution. I have years of experience and training in human relations and have worked on an IBM computer doing word processing and record keeping. My favorite pastime is reading, and I am familiar with the works of many authors.

I would like to meet with you to share more information about my background and experience. I will contact you next week to schedule a convenient time for an interview.

Sincerely,

Harriet Simpson

Tips for Preparing Your Cover Letter:

- Use the same type of paper for both cover letter and resume.
- Keep the letter short—no longer than a single page.
- Construct each cover letter individually. Avoid using a "form" letter.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs.
- Use numerous action words.
- Be extremely careful with grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Use the proper title: "Ms." when addressing a woman, unless Dr., Professor, etc., applies.

Application Forms

Potential employers usually request you to complete an application form in addition to submitting a resume. The application form provides organizations with required details and is used to screen applicants. Neatness and attention to detail on an application form may influence your chances of getting an interview and, ultimately, a job. Most organizations require that you complete the forms in their offices, so be prepared. Collect the following information and have it at your fingertips, perhaps in a notebook or on index cards:

- Basic data: your name and address; phone numbers; Social Security number.
- Education and training: name and address of each institution; dates of attendance; field of study/courses; credits/diploma/degree.
- Employment history and military service: name and address of each organization; position held; dates; salary; reason for leaving; rank; type of discharge.
- Volunteer activities: name and address of each organization; dates; duties/responsibilities; special training received.
- Licenses/credentials/certification.
- Professional/trade/union organizations.
- Personal interests and activities (if related to the kind of work you are seeking).
- References, both personal and work: name and address of each person; title; organization; phone number; relationship.
- Concise statement of your work objective. Since space for responding is often limited, be prepared with a two- to three-sentence description of your work/career goals.

Some Tips on Filling Out Application Forms:

- Read the application form completely before beginning to write.
- Print legibly and neatly with a black pen.
- Fill in all of the blanks, even if some of the information is on the resume you are attaching to the form. If the application specifically indicates that you can attach a resume, you may indicate "See attached resume" under certain sections.
- Applications usually lock you into a chronological format, which may work against the applicant with employment gaps or one who is making a career change. Using the functional or combination resume with an application form can assist in overcoming the chronological problem.
- Have all your personal information with you when going for the interview, such as work history, employers' addresses, supervisors' names, references' names and phone numbers, and Social Security number.
- Provide complete and accurate information that is neat and smudge free. Ask for a new form if you make an error and cannot make a clean correction. Carry a pocket dictionary to check for correct spelling if necessary.
- If the application asks for information that you believe is discriminatory (such as marital status, race, or religion), you may leave these items blank. Be prepared to discuss such items tactfully if asked, however.
- If you need more space to explain a situation, write comments on an attached sheet.
- In the "salary desired" blank, you may write "negotiable" or "open." If you have a minimum, it should be specified. If you must put down a figure, remember the lower you make your salary within rational limits, the more likely you will be offered a job. You can always turn down an unacceptable offer.

- If you are requested to record your specific salary history, include all benefits, such as use of a car, hospitalization, retirement, and other fringe benefits.
- Provide adequate telephone and address information, perhaps including the phone number of someone through whom you can receive a message.
- Include any relevant educational information that will help an employer evaluate your abilities, experience, and potential.
- Talk with your references before giving their names to a potential employer. Obviously, use only those references who will give you good, solid recommendations.

Finally, for your own records, record each job application on a note card. Include the employer's name, address, and phone number; the job applied for; the date of application; and, eventually, the outcome of your application. A sample application form appears on pages 42-43.

Application for Employment

PERSONAL INFORMATION

DATE _____

NAME _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER _____
LAST FIRST MIDDLE

PRESENT ADDRESS _____
STREET CITY STATE

PERMANENT ADDRESS _____
STREET CITY STATE

PHONE NO. _____ REFERRED BY _____

EMPLOYMENT DESIRED

POSITION _____ DATE YOU CAN START _____ SALARY DESIRED _____

ARE YOU EMPLOYED? _____ IF SO, MAY WE INQUIRE OF YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER? _____

EVER APPLIED TO THIS COMPANY BEFORE? _____ WHERE? _____ WHEN? _____

EDUCATION	NAME AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL	YEARS ATTENDED*	DATE GRADUATED*	SUBJECTS STUDIED
GRAMMAR SCHOOL				
HIGH SCHOOL				
COLLEGE				
TRADE, BUSINESS OR CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL				

* THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967 PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF AGE WITH RESPECT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE AT LEAST 40 YEARS OF AGE

WHAT FOREIGN LANGUAGES DO YOU SPEAK FLUENTLY? _____ READ _____ WRITE _____

U.S. MILITARY OR NAVAL SERVICE _____ RANK _____ PRESENT MEMBERSHIP IN NATIONAL GUARD OR RESERVES _____

SPECIAL QUESTIONS

DO NOT ANSWER ANY OF THE QUESTIONS IN THIS FRAMED AREA UNLESS THE EMPLOYER HAS **CHECKED A BOX PRECEDING** A QUESTION THEREBY INDICATING THAT THE INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR A BONA FIDE OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION OR DICTATED BY NATIONAL SECURITY LAWS OR IS NEEDED FOR OTHER LEGALLY PERMISSIBLE REASONS

☐ HEIGHT _____ FEET _____ INCHES ☐ CITIZEN OF U.S. _____ YES _____ NO

☐ WEIGHT _____ LBS ☐ DATE OF BIRTH* _____

☐ _____

_____

* THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967 PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF AGE WITH RESPECT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE AT LEAST 40 YEARS OF AGE

(CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE)

PHYSICAL RECORD:

DO YOU HAVE ANY PHYSICAL DEFECTS THAT PRECLUDE YOU FROM PERFORMING ANY WORK FOR WHICH YOU ARE BEING CONSIDERED?

WERE YOU EVER INJURED? _____ GIVE DETAILS _____

HAVE YOU ANY DEFECTS IN HEARING? _____ IN VISION? _____ IN SPEECH? _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY _____
NAME ADDRESS PHONE NO.

FORMER EMPLOYERS (LIST BELOW LAST FOUR EMPLOYERS, STARTING WITH LAST ONE FIRST)

DATE MONTH AND YEAR	NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	SALARY	POSITION	REASON FOR LEAVING
FROM				
TO				
FROM				
TO				
FROM				
TO				
FROM				
TO				

REFERENCES:
GIVE BELOW THE NAMES OF THREE PERSONS NOT RELATED TO YOU, WHOM YOU HAVE KNOWN AT LEAST ONE YEAR

NAME	ADDRESS	BUSINESS	YEARS KNOWN
1			
2			
3			

I AUTHORIZE INVESTIGATION OF ALL STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN THIS APPLICATION. I UNDERSTAND THAT MISREPRESENTATION OR OMISSION OF FACTS CALLED FOR IS CAUSE FOR DISMISSAL. FURTHER, I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE THAT MY EMPLOYMENT IS FOR NO DEFINITE PERIOD AND MAY, REGARDLESS OF THE DATE OF PAYMENT OF MY WAGES AND SALARY, BE TERMINATED ANY TIME WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS NOTICE.

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

Answering Tough Questions on the Application Form

Salary desired: Avoid being eliminated by stating a salary that is too low or too high. You do not want to be locked into a figure before you are more familiar with the job. Write "negotiable," "open," or leave the item blank.

Health status: You do not have to volunteer information about your health if it has no bearing on your ability to do the job. It is important to list any condition that may be a problem. You can indicate, however, how you propose to get the job done in spite of a health condition or impairment.

Reason for leaving your previous employment: Be brief, honest, and positive. Avoid any negative statements about yourself, the job, or your co-workers. If you were fired from a job, leave this space blank, but be prepared to discuss your reasons if asked.

Thank-You Letters

A thank-you letter simply thanks a person for his or her time and help. You should send one to anyone who has assisted you in your job-search process. Likewise, it is appropriate to send a thank-you letter to the person who interviewed you within 2 or 3 days after a job interview.

Sending a thank-you letter serves several purposes:

- It gives you an opportunity to express gratitude for the interview;
- It helps an employer remember you;
- It reinforces statements you made;
- It summarizes your key skills and how they relate to the job;
- It corrects an impression, or adds something you may have forgotten to say during an interview; and
- It allows another opportunity to state your interest in a job.

The thank-you letter for a job interview should be typewritten and brief, just a paragraph or two. This important follow-up to an interview could make the difference between getting the job and being screened out with most of the other applicants. A sample thank-you letter is included on page 45.

10307 Avondale Drive
Carrolton, MI 33809
August 20, 1990

Mr. Bill Bowman
XYZ Publishing Company
P. O. Box 3209
Carrolton, MI 33817

Dear Mr. Bowman:

Thank you for interviewing me for the position of assistant sales manager on Tuesday, August 19.

After learning more about the job and your expectations, I am certain I could meet the requirements and more. Meeting the public is natural for me. Being an avid reader, I am familiar with many books, authors, and catalog systems. I am a hard-working, dependable individual and have managed people effectively in a variety of situations.

I am currently available to begin work. Please call me at 663-8395 as soon as you make your decision.

Sincerely,

Harriet Simpson

The following checklists will help you to ensure your resume, cover letter, and thank-you letter are designed for maximum effectiveness.

Cover Letter Evaluation Sheet

In the grid below, mark an "X" in the square if you think a statement about your cover letter is true. If you think a statement is not true or you are uncertain, leave the square blank.

The cover letter or modified letter/resume meets the following criteria:

	True	Uncertain	Not True
1. One page or less			
2. Typed			
3. Includes date and address			
4. Applicant s name, address, and phone number complete			
5. Well balanced on the page			
6. Addressed to a particular person			
7. "Ms." used if addressee is a woman			
8. Appropriate salutation used if blind ad			
9. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation correct			
10. Concise sentences and paragraphs			
11. Current, accepted business English			
12. Source of information or connection for job identified			
13. Typographical corrections invisible			
14. All ideas relevant			
15. Sells the applicant			
16. Refers to skills specifically related to the job			
17. Conveys a positive attitude			
18. "Negotiable" used in response to salary requests for requirements and history			
19. Conveys professional image			
20. "Enclosure" notation used if resume enclosed			
Totals			

Are there ways you can improve your cover letter?

Resume Evaluation Sheet

In the grid below, mark an "X" in the square if you think a statement about your resume is true. If you think a statement is not true or you are uncertain, leave the square blank.

The resume or modified letter/resume meets the following criteria:

	True	Uncertain	Not True
1. Applicant's name, address, and phone number clearly visible on each page			
2. Two pages or less			
3. Typed			
4. Layout simple, professional, and attractive			
5. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation correct			
6. Typographical corrections invisible			
7. Brief work/career objective stated			
8. All data relevant			
9. Action verbs used			
10. Statements short and to the point			
11. Information presented logically			
12. Tailored to the job in question			
13. Skills directly related to the position emphasized			
Totals			

Are there ways you can improve your resume?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Thank-You Letter: Evaluation Sheet

In the grid below, mark an "X" in the square if you think a statement about your thank-you letter is true. If you think a statement is not true or you are uncertain, leave the square blank.

The thank-you letter meets the following criteria:

	True	Uncertain	Not True
1. Brief and to the point			
2. Typed			
3. Sent within 24 hours of the interview			
4. Reinforces statements made or adds something forgotten			
5. Courteous			
6. Refers to the applicant's skills again			
7. Addressed correctly			
8. Applicant's name, address, and phone number complete			
9. Typographical corrections invisible			
10. Conveys a professional image			
Totals			

Are there ways you can improve your thank-you letter?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

An effective resume can be your ticket to a job interview. The employment interview provides an opportunity to determine if the "match" between you and a particular job is right. Employment interviews allow you to demonstrate that you are the best person for a job, while at the same time allowing an employer to give you an accurate perspective of the job.

In the employment interview you want to provide information about yourself that demonstrates you would be a valuable and productive member of the organization. At the same time, the employment interview provides you with an opportunity to obtain specific information about the job and the organization in which you are interested. This information will be very important in order to help you make an informed decision about whether to accept or reject the job if it is offered to you.

Preparing for the Interview

Effective employment interviewing involves preparation and practice. To be prepared for an employment interview you must acquire knowledge about yourself, about the job, and about the employer in which you are interested. You will need the following information about an organization prior to your interview:

- The typical duties and salary range for the job in which you are interested.
- The background of the organization (How long has it been in operation? What is the outlook for its future?).
- The products or services the organization handles.
- The number of products or services sold by the organization.
- The vision and goals of the organization.
- Any specific problems or issues that might be of concern to the organization.

By being prepared, you will be able to answer and ask questions in an informed, confident manner.

A final phase of your preparation involves gathering information about the person who will interview you. Try to use your networks or other sources to gain information about the individual who will conduct your employment interview. If you have difficulty gathering information about the person who will interview you, simply rely on your preparation and research concerning the job and the organization to help you effectively perform in the interview. Always try to be interviewed by the person who has the power to hire you.

Practice is vital to successful interviewing. Role playing is a valuable method for improving your interviewing skills. Enlist your family and friends to help you practice before important interviews. It also is helpful to jot down a few notes after each interview listing the strengths and weaknesses you think you exhibited during the interview. Be fair with yourself about your performance. Avoid being overly self-critical, but do spend some extra practice time working on any weaknesses you identify.

Final Preparations: A Last-Minute Check Before Leaving for the Interview

- ☐ Call to confirm the interview time.
- ☐ Know the interviewer's name, title, and phone number.

- Know the organization's address and have directions for getting there. Make a practice run before your interview.
- Make sure your appearance is appropriate.
- Take with you:
  - _____ a couple of pens
  - _____ your application form notes
  - _____ two copies of your resume
  - _____ your list of references
- Make sure you arrive at least 10 minutes before the scheduled time of your interview so you can relax and feel comfortable with your surroundings before the actual interview.

Your Nonverbal Behavior during the Interview

What you portray during the course of an interview by the way you look, act, and deal with the physical environment in the interview is as important as what you actually say during the interview. Nonverbal factors are significant in making a positive first impression. Your first communication with an interviewer occurs through nonverbal channels. Before you say anything, your appearance, body movements, and management of the physical environment influence an interviewer's opinion of you.

Physical Appearance: Your physical appearance plays an important role in establishing first impressions. When interviewing for a job, you should dress in an attractive, professional manner. Although some employers may be concerned only about your ability to do the job, it is always to your advantage to present yourself professionally to the organization. This does not mean that you must buy an expensive suit (particularly if it stretches your budget). Instead dress simply in a conservative, professional manner regardless of the cost of your clothing. The following is a general checklist for clothing and personal appearance preparation:

- Clothing:
  - _____ Select clothing appropriate for the job you are seeking. (Conservative, tailored attire, preferably in dark colors, is most appropriate. Avoid flashy prints, plaids, or other faddish type clothing. Also be sure to avoid casual clothing or out-of-date fashions.)
  - _____ Clean and press interview outfit.
  - _____ Polish shoes.
  - _____ Minimize number of accessories or flashy pieces of jewelry.

- Personal appearance:
  - _____ Have hair styled neatly.
  - _____ Freshen breath.
  - _____ Use colognes, perfumes, and makeup sparingly.

Body Movement: A second important aspect of your nonverbal behavior is body movement. You should carry yourself confidently in an employment interview. Some specific suggestions for body movement during an employment interview include:

- When greeting the interviewer, give a firm, dry handshake whether you are interviewed by a man or a woman. Combine your firm handshake with a smile and direct eye contact.
- Make as much eye contact with the interviewer as possible.
- Demonstrate your interest in the interview by listening attentively. This includes smiling, nodding your head, and leaning forward to indicate you are interested in what is being said.
- Stand and sit straight. Avoid slouching.
- Avoid fidgeting with your hair, clothes, or accessories.
- Never smoke or chew gum.

Managing the Physical Environment: Every culture has its own set of norms concerning the management of the physical environment. Generally, Americans tend not to want to be in close proximity to people they do not know very well unless, of course, it is beyond their control, such as

when crowding into an elevator. It is also common for high status individuals to control the physical environment. With this in mind, some specific suggestions concerning the management of the physical environment in an employment interview should be heeded:

- Let the interviewer indicate where you should sit; do not rush to be seated when you enter the interviewer's office.
- Treat the interviewer's office with respect. Avoid placing your possessions (pens, papers) on the interviewer's desk, chairs, or tables. Of course, if you are asked to supply a resume or some other information, you can hand this to the interviewer or place it on his or her desk.

Your Verbal Behavior during the Interview

An employment interview is a discussion between you and the interviewer. Your verbal responses give information about you to the interviewer. These responses, plus impressions gained from nonverbal behavior, influence decisions about your potential employment. An interviewer must secure answers to four basic questions:

1. What are your reasons for wishing to join our organization?
2. How much experience do you have in this area?
3. How do your skills and values fit with our organization?
4. What are your salary requirements?

Often these questions are not asked directly; they may be hidden within other questions and comments. By knowing the interviewer's real agenda, you can direct your responses to meet his or her needs and serve your purpose of getting the job.

Keep in mind, most of the people who interview you are not professional interviewers. They are likely to be as concerned about the interview as you are. The interviewer's credibility may be on the line. He or she cannot afford to make a hiring mistake and must get answers to basic questions. Help the interviewer by providing as much information as possible (although, it is not advisable to get too specific about your salary requirements until you have been given a concrete offer). During the course of the interview, the interviewer must decide:

- whether you can do the job;
- whether you have a good work attitude and can get along with others in the organization;
- whether you have any character flaws or problems that will cause tension on the job; and
- whether you are overqualified and may just be taking the job until something better comes along.

Knowing what the interviewer is trying to discover will help you prepare and practice so you can communicate effectively about yourself.

Some Tips Concerning Your Verbal Behavior during the Interview: Your verbal responses are crucial to the interviewer's assessment of your potential value to the organization. Here are a few tips for communicating verbally:

- Answer questions with complete remarks. Try to avoid one- and two-word answers. By the same token, avoid rambling. Let the interviewer control the conversation.
- Try to avoid interrupting the interviewer. Answer questions after they are asked.
- Avoid swearing (even if the interviewer does). Refrain from colloquialisms, slang, such as "you know," "OK," and "um," and other powerless forms of speech.
- Be honest. Portray yourself positively, and give full credit to your skills and abilities, but do not lie or brag.
- Be respectful when addressing the interviewer. Do not use his or her first name unless you are asked to do so.

The Interview: Questions

Employers usually ask questions that fit into these broad categories and can be responded to as follows.

Questions Employers Want Answered:	How You Respond; Points You Want to Make:
Why did you choose this organization?	Because you have done your research, you can speak knowledgeably about the organization, its goals, and how those goals match yours.
What can you do for me?	You know what their organizational needs are and how you can help meet them.
Have you done this kind of work before?	Respond with brief, to-the-point descriptions of how your skills relate directly to the employer's needs.
Will you fit in here?	The employer may be concerned about your fitting in with younger workers, taking direction from a younger supervisor, or coping with a hectic pace. Mention briefly and in a positive way the jobs you have had with similar environments. Emphasize that you respect the supervisor's role and you assess people based on ability, not age.
How much will hiring you cost me?	Try to postpone responding to this question until a job offer has been made. Your salary should be related to your experience and skills. If asked, provide a salary range.

- Be sure your answers are clear, concise, and relevant to the questions.
- Emphasize the positive aspects of your age: work ethic, loyalty, good health, high energy, enthusiasm, maturity, and flexibility.
- Be sure that you personalize your answers and make them relevant to the position for which you are interviewing.

ACTIVITY: Typical Interview Questions

The following is a list of questions typically asked in an employment interview. Use this list to practice your interviewing skills. Ask a family member or friend to role play an interview situation with you. Even if the questions you practice are not asked, the experience will help you feel prepared and confident when you go into the employment interview.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Have you done this type of work before?
3. Why are you interested in this job?
4. What are your salary requirements?
5. What was your salary at your last job?
6. Why would you be better for this job than someone else?
7. How many days a year did you miss at your last job? Why?
8. How is your health?
9. Do you have any physical limitations that would prevent you from doing this job?
10. When would you be available to start if you were selected?
11. What are your major strengths?
12. What are your major weaknesses?
13. How do you compensate for your weaknesses on the job?
14. What are your immediate employment goals?
15. What are your long-term employment goals?
16. How long do you plan to keep this job if you get it?
17. What kinds of machines and equipment can you operate?
18. What have you been doing since you left your last job?
19. Have you ever been fired? Why?
20. What kind of people do you work with best?
21. What kind of work environment do you prefer?
22. What did you enjoy most about your previous job?
23. What did you enjoy least about your previous job?
24. What were your typical duties in your previous job?
25. Why are you looking for a new job?
26. What would you ideally like to do?
27. How do you feel about: pressure, deadlines, travel, relocating, overtime, or weekend work?
28. What makes you lose your temper?
29. What do you like to do in your spare time?
30. To what type of managerial style do you respond best?
31. For what type of organization do you want to work?
32. How old are you?
33. What would you like to accomplish if you were hired for this job?
34. Give me an example of your creativity, problem-solving ability, initiative, willingness to work hard, reliability.
35. What are the toughest problems you have faced, and how did you handle them?
36. What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?
37. What have you learned from your previous work experience?

Remember, Be Positive. It is very important to be positive during an interview. This is your opportunity to communicate to an employer you are willing and able to take the job under discussion. An interview is not the place for negatives. Always try to answer questions in terms of what you can do, rather than what you cannot do. Many interviewers will ask questions specifically designed to elicit negative responses. For example, an interviewer might ask a question such as, "What do you see as your major weakness?" You should always try to answer these negative questions with a positive response. For example, you might answer, "Well, some people say that I am too organized," or "I am too detail oriented. I always try to get things right." These are the types of "weaknesses" that an employer will be more than willing to accept.

What about Tough Questions?

The best way to handle difficult questions in an employment interview is in an honest, positive manner. If you are asked questions about gaps in your employment history, your health, or any physical limitations, provide honest answers, but always emphasize your willingness and desire to do the job. For example, an effective response to a question concerning gaps in your employment history might be, "I was out of the job market for a long time raising my family. I gained valuable experience doing that, however. The budgeting, organizing, and planning I did as a homemaker are skills I can use in this job." Additionally, if you have gained experience through volunteer activities, this would be an appropriate time to highlight such exposure. You must be honest and not try to "cover up" when asked a tough question, but at the same time use these questions as a means of reinforcing your ability and desire for the job.

A Guide for Dealing with Tough Interview Questions

Questions Employers Ask:	How You Respond: Points You Want to Make:
Tell me about yourself.	Employers want to gain information about your work experience, not your personal life. Talk about experiences and goals that relate to the specific job for which you are applying.
How would you describe yourself?	Discuss positive, work-related attitudes. For example, you might suggest that you enjoy working with people of all ages, are loyal, committed, etc.
Have you done this type of work before?	Link the skills you possess to the abilities needed for the job. Answer truthfully about how your experience relates to the position.
How is your health?	Answer directly that your health will not affect your performance. If any physical limitations do exist, indicate how you manage these limitations for top job performance. If health concerns are implied, yet not directly brought up in the interview, consider describing yourself in terms of your continuing ability to be productive. ***Feed information into the conversation that positively reflects your desire to be considered for the job.*** Do not always wait for a direct question. (See information on the Americans With Disabilities Act in "Resources.")

A Guide for Dealing with Tough Interview Questions

Questions Employers Ask:	How You Respond; Points You Want to Make:
Why did you leave your last job?	Be honest, professional, and positive in your response, even if you were fired or quit in anger. Avoid any statements that may say something negative about yourself, your work, or your ability to get along with others. Never criticize your former employer or co-workers in an interview. "I was seeking career advancement" or "I wanted to pursue a new career opportunity" might be the best response for difficult situations.
You seem to be overqualified for this position. Why do you want this job?	The employer may be questioning your goals or challenging your long-term commitment to the job. Indicate your sincere interest in working for the organization. Emphasize the unique attitudes, abilities, and interests that led you to apply for this job.
We do not have many employees here who are your age. Would that bother you?	Although federal law bars employers from considering a candidate's age in making any employment decision, it is possible you will be asked age-related questions in an interview perhaps out of the interviewer's ignorance or perhaps to test your response. Explain that you believe your age would be an asset to the organization. Emphasize that you are still eager to learn and improve, and that it does not matter who helps you. The age of the people who work with you is irrelevant.

Dealing with the Age Factor: Some employers may be concerned that midlife and older workers will be reluctant to accept younger people as managers and bosses. This concern may be directly addressed in the interview. Age should not be a determining factor in leadership; both younger and older people are capable of leading and managing. If your willingness to work for a younger person is questioned in the interview, be sure to address this concern. One response that can be very effective for dispelling this concern is: "When I get to the point where I can't learn from someone, older or younger than me, I will quit working." Realize that your age and life experience are a benefit, not a handicap. Emphasize that you will be a responsible, mature, and dedicated employee.

Questions with a Surprise Factor: Questions such as "What makes you angry?" may be asked to give the interviewer an idea of how you handle the unexpected. Relax,

pause, and say something with which the employer would probably agree, for example, "I get angry when I see employees taking leave to which they are not entitled."

Getting the Answers You Need

During the employment interview, you should do more than just answer questions. You should use this time to get answers to the questions you have concerning the job you are considering. You will get answers to some of your questions (such as whether you think the work environment will suit you) indirectly from what the interviewer says and through your observations. Other questions should be addressed directly. Effective interviewers will give you plenty of time to ask questions. Make sure you are prepared with some questions you would like answered in the job interview. For example, any of the following questions are appropriate during an employment interview.

- What are the specific duties and responsibilities of the job?
- Could you describe a typical day or week in this position?
- What are the training and educational opportunities?
- How have those who have had this job in the past advanced in the organization?
- What are the organization's future plans and goals?
- What are some examples of the best results produced by people in this job?
- What exactly would you like to have me accomplish in this position?
- Do you have any questions about my qualifications?
- How soon will you make a hiring decision?
- Could you describe your ideal candidate for this position?
- Do you have any reservations about hiring me?

Closing the Interview

It is up to the interviewer to bring the interview to a close. At the conclusion of the interview, make a brief statement of your continued interest in the job. Summarize how your skills, interests, experiences, and goals would contribute to your doing a good job.

Next, ask the interviewer when he or she plans to make the hiring decision or what is her or his time line for making a decision. Ask if you may call to inquire about your status with respect to the job. Be prepared at the end of the interview to provide references and your resume.

After the Interview

After an employment interview you should do the following:

- Send a thank-you letter within 2 or 3 days of the interview.
- Call the interviewer regarding his or her decision at the time specified in the closing of your interview. Check with an interviewer if you have not heard from her or him by the specified date. Unfortunately, many employers hire without extending the courtesy of a phone call or a letter to let you know you were not selected. Try not to get discouraged by this as it is all too common.
- If you are told that you did not get the job, try to find out why. For example, you might say, "I plan to continue interviewing for this type of position. Do you have any suggestions that would increase my opportunities for success for similar positions?" Emphasize that if any similar positions become open within the organization, you would still be interested in working there. Also, ask the interviewer if he or she could recommend any other organizations that you might talk with about the kind of position you are considering.
- If there are strong indications that you were not selected because of age, you are protected under the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA). The ADEA prohibits arbitrary age discrimination in virtually all terms and conditions of employment including, but not limited

to, hiring, job retention, compensation, and training opportunities. Most employees and applicants age 40 and over are protected by the ADEA from discrimination by most employers with 20 or more workers (including state and local governments) and labor organizations of more than 25 members. Most federal employees are also covered by the ADEA. In addition, employment agencies are prohibited from failing or refusing to refer for employment and from classifying or referring anyone for employment on the basis of age. The use of printed or published notices or advertisements indicating any preference, limitation, or specification based on age is also a violation of the ADEA.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is the federal agency that enforces the ADEA.

- Case officers can give you information and guidance and assist you in filing your charges.

- EEOC has a toll-free telephone number: 1-800-USA-EEOC.

Developing a Job-Search Plan

In this booklet you have identified your current interests and skills and potential employment barriers and learned how to prepare effective written materials to support your job search and interview successfully. Now you are ready to gather information regarding potential employers, establish the goals for your job search, and develop a plan of action to achieve those goals.

Job-search planning allows you to take control of your job search and provides the best opportunity to use your unique skills and interests. Planning requires a personal commitment and generates self-confidence throughout the job-search process.

In planning your job search, you move from learning about opportunities to setting and achieving your employment goals.

Research Interviews

One valuable job-search strategy is the research interview.

The research interview is an excellent, low-pressure way for you to obtain more information about a job, field, organization, or industry in which you are interested.

The research interview *is not a job interview*. You are seeking information only. Do not mix the two. You are asking people to talk about a job, field, organization, or industry in which they are involved in an informal situation with no strings attached. Most people, if approached properly, will be flattered to be asked for their opinions and advice. Always visit with a person actually doing the work in which you are interested.

Research interviews can provide you with job information and visibility to others. They can also expand your employment network.

How to Obtain a Research Interview:

Research interviews should be scheduled by telephone or in writing. If you just walk in off the street and request an interview, you probably will wind up talking to someone from the organization's public relations or personnel office. These individuals are not the persons with the information you need. You need to see someone doing the job in which you are interested.

Before you phone or write for an appointment, find out the name and title of the person to whom you want to talk. You may have found this information through your previous research or through your personal contacts.

If you call to request an interview:

- Introduce yourself using a personal referral, if possible.
- Explain your purpose.
- Emphasize that you are trying to gather information, not asking for a job.
- Ask for a 20- to 30-minute appointment.
- If you meet with resistance, stress again that you are only seeking information, not a job.

- If the person still declines, ask if he or she could suggest anyone else with whom you can talk; also ask if it would be all right to use his or her name when contacting that person.

If you write to request an interview:

- Include the name of the person who referred you.
- Explain that you are exploring a possible change in careers and considering the field your interviewee represents; you are seeking information, advice, and a 20- to 30-minute interview.
- Emphasize that you are not seeking a job.
- State that you will call on a certain date to schedule the interview. Be sure to follow through on your request.
- Keep the letter brief, no more than one page.
- If the individual will not talk with you in person, see if he or she will give you an interview over the phone.
- Ask for referrals and for permission to use the person's name when contacting those referrals.

How to Prepare for the Interview: Research the organization where you plan to interview. Prepare a list of four or five pertinent questions. Have two or three backup questions ready, too.

Prepare open-ended questions that ask *How?*, *What?*, or *Why?* These types of questions give the person you are interviewing an opportunity to delve more deeply into the subject than questions that call for "Yes" or "No" responses.

How to Conduct the Interview:

- Be on time or slightly early.
- Spend the first few minutes establishing rapport by engaging in pleasant small talk.
- State your appreciation for the person's time.
- Give enough information about yourself and what you have already found out to provide a context for the person's responses to your questions.
- Before you begin to ask your questions, explain clearly that your specific purpose at this stage of your search is to obtain information.
- Be a good listener.
- Remember, you are the interviewer. You should control the pacing and direction of the interview.
- Be alert to new lines of questioning that emerge from answers to your questions. Be flexible. Do not be afraid to deviate from your prepared questions.
- Observe the use of jargon and technical vocabulary, appearance, the level of formality, and the general atmosphere. Would you be comfortable working there?
- Through your manner, appearance, and questions, convey that you are prepared, competent, confident, and enjoying yourself.
- Always ask for two or more referrals and for permission to use the person's name when calling referrals for an interview.
- Obtain the person's business card.
- Do not stay beyond the time you requested. End the interview on time and thank the person for his or her time and help.

Pertinent Questions for Research Interviews

1. What do you like best about what you do?
2. What do you like least?
3. Is this job conducive to flexible hours? Part-time? Job-sharing?
4. What are the most critical skills utilized in this type of work?
5. Are the technical requirements changing rapidly?
6. How much formal education is typically required?
7. What is the salary range in this community for doing this type of work?
8. What are the physical requirements?
9. Are there safety hazards involved with this type of work?
10. Is there upward mobility in this field?
11. How plentiful is this type of job in this community? Nationwide?
12. What are the trends for this industry?

13. What are the projections for demand for this type of work?
14. What trade magazines and materials do you recommend I read concerning this type of work?
15. What other people should I talk with concerning this type of work and this industry?
16. May I use your name when I call your referral for an interview?

Follow-Up to the Interview

- Within the next few days, send a brief, handwritten or typed thank-you letter.
- Keep accurate records of the interview and the information and insights you obtained from it.
- Move to the next referral on your list.

Setting Goals

Once you have the necessary information about yourself and the type of job you are targeting, you should establish a goal for your job-search. Your job-search goal should be *specific* and *measurable*. You should be able to state each goal clearly and concisely so another person can readily understand what you hope to achieve and you will later know whether or not you have reached your goal. Specific goals give your Job-Search Plan focus and direction. For example, your employment goal might be to work in the accounting department of a major organization.

Your goals need to be *realistic*. They need to be achievable, even though they may be challenging. Consider, for example, the employment goal of working in the accounting department of a major organization. An individual with skills and interests appropriate for this goal would also need to consider the available employment opportunities within her chosen geographic area. Additionally, the salary for such an accounting job should meet her income requirements. In other words, your goal should be in harmony with your overall needs and preferences.

Can you state three employment goals you want to accomplish within the next 3 years?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Are your statements specific, measurable, and realistic? What additional goals should you consider?

Identifying Action Steps

Once you have established your employment goals, the next step in your Job-Search Plan is to identify concrete action steps to achieve your goals. If your goal is employment in the accounting department of a large organization, some of the following action steps might be necessary:

- Identify the type of work you wish to do in the accounting department.
- Identify networks.
- Work with networks.
- Identify major organizations in your chosen geographic region with accounting departments.
- Research those organizations.
- Identify which major organizations have job openings in their accounting departments.
- Prepare a resume.
- Fill out application information.
- Submit job applications.
- Request interviews.
- Practice for interviews.
- Plan your interviewing attire.
- Locate available transportation and routes for reaching each interview.
- Attend interviews.
- Follow up on interviews (thank-you letters, additional materials).

Locating Resources

The next step in developing your Job-Search Plan is locating the resources necessary to complete your action steps. Where do you go for information? Who can help? What information do you already have? Resources for your action plan are all around you. The following is a list of possible resources for some of the action steps identified in our accounting example.

Action Step	Possible Resources
Identify networks	Professional accounting organizations
	Key community resources such as displaced homemakers programs, and the Older Women's League.
	Friends
	Co-workers
Identify major organizations in your chosen geographic region with accounting departments	Telephone directory
	Chamber of Commerce
	Personal contacts
	Research interviews
	Professional directories
	Newspapers
	Local library
	Directories of local business and industry
Identify which major organizations have job openings in their accounting departments	Personal contacts
	Personnel departments
	Research interviews
	Advertisements
	Employment agencies
	Company bulletin boards
	Telephone inquiries
Prepare a resume	Local library
	Advertisements for professional typists
	Someone to proofread and to give feedback
Submit job applications	Personnel departments
	Personal contacts

Developing Activities

After you know what you want to do and with what resources, you can begin to plan the specific actions you need to take and the time frame in which these actions should occur. The following activities might support some of the action steps we have just identified for the example of pursuing employment in an accounting department.

Action Step	Activities
Research specific organizations	Schedule two research interviews
	Go to the local library to review annual reports
	Talk with a friend
	Ask for information from public relations or personnel departments
Request interviews	Call heads of accounting departments
	Contact personnel departments
	File applications for scheduled interviews
	Attend recruitment fairs/events
	Write letters
Fill out application forms	Compile application information
	Request application forms in person or in writing
	Check completed application forms for accuracy
Practice interviewing	Make a list of possible interview questions
	Develop answers for potential interview questions
	Set time for practice
	Practice

Establishing a Time Line

Because many of your action items relate to each other, it is important for you to accomplish your overall activities in a logical time sequence. For example, the preparation of your resume may take approximately a week by the time it has been professionally typed (assuming that you do not type). If you are scheduling employment interviews, you will want to make sure your resume is ready before you begin personal contacts. You may want to do your specific organizational research while the resume is being typed. You also can do practice interviews, plan your interview attire, locate transportation, and a variety of other items while awaiting the completion of your resume. You must determine which activities can occur simultaneously and which activities should be sequenced one after another.

Your time line can also help you focus your efforts. Without some emphasis on the *when* of your job search, you can fall prey to what many unsuccessful job seekers do—they spend more time thinking about the search than they do searching. In fact, research indicates many people spend no more than 3 to 4 hours per week in pursuing employment goals. Much of the remainder of the time is spent worrying about employment problems. Using a well-developed time line as part of your Job-Search Plan will help you focus on *doing* rather than *worrying* and on *accomplishment* rather than *procrastination*. A sample Job-Search Plan is provided on page 63. A blank Job-Search Plan can be found on the following page. Take time to create a plan for your job-search.

Job-Search Plan

Example
Goal Statement *to pursue employment in an accounting field*

Action Step	Resources	Activities	Time Line
-Identify major organizations with accounting departments	-Telephone directory -Chamber of Commerce -Personal contacts -Research interviews	-Schedule the research interviews -Talk with friends about their knowledge of the organizations -Ask for information from public/personnel departments	Mar. 16 Mar. 20 Mar. 20
-Identify which major organizations have job openings in their accounting departments	-Personal contacts -Personnel departments -Research interviews -Advertisements -Employment agencies -Company bulletin boards	-Call heads of accounting departments -Contact personnel departments -Attend recruitment fairs	Mar. 25 Mar. 25 Apr. 1

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Job-Search Plan

Example
Goal Statement _____

Action Step	Resources	Activities	Time Line

How Can I Get More Education and Training?

Part of your job search plan may include obtaining further education and training. The following suggested resources have been grouped into five categories:

- educational credit
- educational programs
- testing
- financial aid
- career counseling

Several of these resources fall into more than one area of assistance.

(Some of the following information was reprinted with permission from *Better Late than Never: Financial Aid for Re-entry Women Seeking Education and Training*, produced by the Women's Equity Action League, an organization no longer in operation.)

Educational Credit for Class Work and/or Experience

Continuing Education Units (CEUs): CEUs are awarded for individual learning and attendance in certain continuing education experiences. Each unit represents ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction. If CEUs are available, the sponsoring organization of the learning event will publicize their availability to enrollees who may then apply for the credit.

Accumulating CEUs demonstrates the serious attention you give to your own growth. Professional organizations and employers vary widely in their appreciation of and willingness to recognize CEUs for such things as promotion or recertification.

Recommendation of Credit: After an extensive evaluation process, an organization's staff training course may be compared with similar college-level study, and a recommendation for credit is made by the American Council on Education (ACE) Program on Non-Collegiate-Sponsored Instruction. A college or university accepts this recommendation at its own discretion. A catalog available from ACE (in most libraries) lists the programs that have been reviewed; write Program on Non-Collegiate-Sponsored Instruction, ACE, One Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036.

Educational Programs

Correspondence courses: Courses, or even degrees, can be completed by correspondence. Such programs can be sponsored by all-mail schools or by the extension divisions of larger universities. These vary widely in quality and value for dollars spent, at both the collegiate and the technical levels, so check out thoroughly any course or school you are considering. One source of information is the National University Continuing Education Association, One Dupont Circle, Suite 420, Washington, DC 20036. Another is the National Home Study Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Yet another is the regional accrediting association serving your area.

Vocational Technical Schools: Vo-tech schools offer specialized hands-on training to obtain and retain employment. Their classes often include nursing, word processing, clerical skills, printing, and culinary arts. In recent years the trend has been to increase vo-tech job-related training classes for older displaced homemakers, linking their classes directly to work force opportunities.

Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Programs: These programs offer counseling, job-readiness classes, classroom training, and information and referral to other community resources. Contact the Displaced Homemakers Network at 1625 K Street, N.W., Suite 930, Washington DC 20006.

Adult Basic Education: Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs offer literacy training through the eighth-grade level through various providers. Older adults most commonly attend classes in the evening; programs are available through local education agencies and community colleges. ABE programs may be one answer for older people with an employment history in agricultural or unskilled jobs who need some literacy training in order to perform certain tasks or to improve reading or basic math skills. Alternatives to the ABE program that teach reading on a one-on-one basis include national programs such as Lauback Literacy and Literacy Volunteers of America, public library-based programs, and literacy training offered through churches and community-based organizations.

External Degrees: College degrees may be earned through institutions requiring no or very limited on-site residency. Most external degree programs grant credit for college-level learning achieved in any setting. For more information consult *Bear's Guide to Non-Traditional College Degrees* (10th edition), Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA, or *Who Offers Part-Time Degree Programs?* (2nd edition), Peterson's Guides, toll-free 800-225-0261.

Testing

General Education Development (GED): The GED is a test for high school equivalency that is open to any adult. It is a five-part test covering English, social studies, natural sciences, literature, and mathematics. For more information, write the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, 1112 16th Street, N.W., Suite 420, Washington, DC 20036, or check with your local school system or public library.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP): A series of more than 50 examinations for credit, this program is recognized by 1700 institutions. There are five general tests (English, mathematics, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences) and a wide variety of specific subject tests. By passing the exam, you receive credit for a given class without having to enroll and attend, thus the expression "CLEP out of a class." For information write College Entrance Examination Board, 45 Columbus Avenue, New York, NY 10023, or inquire about CLEP at your local library or community college.

Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education (DANTES): DANTES is an educational support system for military personnel of all armed services. Contact your local base education center for DANTES test and tuition assistance.

Financial Aid and Subsidized Training and Employment

Federal aid programs are a first step to finding financial assistance, but remember that budget cuts have decreased the availability of federal student aid. You may want to explore three sources for subsidized training and employment.

JTPA: The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982 is a source of federal funds for training and employment in the private sector. Various sources of funds in JTPA can be used to assist people 55 and over who qualify for the income limits. Most older workers served through JTPA have been in "Three Percent Programs." Your state employment service or city Agency on Aging can help you find out if you qualify for JPTA funds.

SCSEP: While JTPA focuses on training and placement of eligible workers in private-sector jobs, Title V of the Older Americans Act funds the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and places people in community service organizations. SCSEP provides work training and serves as a source of income for people 55 and over. The work experience positions provided through SCSEP can help older women meet immediate income needs while they

prepare for long-term employment opportunities. Participants must qualify under specific income guidelines.

AARP is one of the national contractors administering SCSEP. Your local Senior Community Service Employment Program is listed in the white pages of your phone directory, or check with your local employment office.

SEE Program: Since 1976 the American Association of Retired Persons has worked with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a program that uses the tremendous national resource of older workers. AARP's Senior Environmental Employment (SEE) Program provides a variety of paid part- and full-time jobs to older workers.

Available jobs range from clerical to highly technical support positions within the EPA. Job titles include administrative assistant, bookkeeper, chemist, editor, laboratory technician, program information specialist, statistician, technical writer, and telecommunications coordinator.

You can request more information by writing to: Program Coordinator, AARP/Senior Environmental Employment Program, 601 E Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20049.

Should your request for federal financial aid be denied because of eligibility requirements, many private resources remain for you to use.

- Contact the reference librarian at your local library who can direct you to a complete catalog of traditional grants.
- Consult the *Encyclopedia of Associations* as a useful informational resource. Some associations sponsor students in particular fields.
- Study your library's financial aid directories for more leads.
- Contact counseling centers, financial aid offices, and the center for women and/or continuing education programs of local community colleges and universities.

Locating financial aid is a creative process and often a difficult one. The contacts and ideas provided here will lead to others. Be persistent.

Counseling

Displaced homemaker programs at vo-tech schools and JTPA and SCSEP programs may offer career counseling as well as referral to mental health professionals, guided support groups, and specific need programs. Read your newspaper and library's community calendar for announcements of church and community-based counseling programs. Colleges, universities, and community colleges also sometimes provide career counseling to nonstudents who express an interest in enrolling.

Resources

Back to Work: How to Re-Enter the Working World. Nancy Schuman and William Lewis. Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1985. $8.95. Gives reassuring advice and winning job-search strategies for women reentering the job market. Includes useful tips on self-assessment, resumes, networking, and interviewing.

Beyond Success: How Volunteer Service Can Help You Begin Making a Life Instead of Just a Living. John F. Raynolds III and Eleanor Raynolds, CBE. Master Media Limited, New York, 1988. $19.95. This is a guide to gaining personal satisfaction through volunteer service. It will appeal to young volunteers trying out career paths, midlife people seeking enrichment to their everyday jobs, and retirees keeping and making new friends through service to the community.

Going into Business for Yourself: New Beginnings after 50. Ina Lee Selden. Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenview, IL. $8.95. This book is filled with expert advice and practical information on how to assess your entrepreneurial qualities, analyze your marketable skills, examine business and economic trends, secure venture capital and trade credit, and prepare a sound business plan.

Happier by Degrees. Pam Mendelson. Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA. $8.95. A good book for women returning to college or just starting out. Covers every detail from financial aid to child care.

"The New MBA (Motherhood is a Business Asset)," Family Circle, 2/21/89. Eleanor Berman. This article will help you identify skills developed through nonpaid activities that are transferable to the work place.

Re-Entering: Successful Back-to-Work Strategies for Women Seeking a Fresh Start. Eleanor Berman. Crown Publishers, New York, 1980. $8.95. This book identifies hidden strengths and strategies to overcome the fear of reentering the work force. It zeroes in on definite careers and provides information about financial assistance for training, advice on keeping your family happy while reentering, and strategies for moving ahead on the job.

When Can You Start? The Complete Job Search Guide for Women of All Ages. The Staff of Catalyst, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1981. $9.95. This book is a wealth of useful information and activities for assessing skills and interests that translate to the work place and effective resume and interviewing strategies.

Women Take Care: The Consequences of Caregiving in Today's Society. Tish Sommers and Laurie Shields. Triad Publishing Company, Gainesville, FL, 1987. This book addresses the implications of the caregiving role on women's lives and the resources needed to support caregiving.

Working Smart: A Woman's Guide to Starting a Career. Viviana Consoli. Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenview, IL, 1987. $12.95. Written especially for women who are just getting started in a career, this book zeroes in on the special challenges faced by women in today's work place.

ABOUT AARP

AARP is the nation's leading organization for people age 50 and over. It serves their needs and interests through legislative advocacy, research, informative programs, and community services provided by a network of local chapters and experienced volunteers throughout the country. The organization also offers members a wide range of special membership benefits, including Modern Maturity magazine and the monthly Bulletin.

ABOUT THE WORK FORCE PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT

AARP educates employers, employees, and the general public about retirement and employment issues affecting older workers through the Association's Work Force Programs Department. The Department assists midlife and older workers to make informed decisions about employment and retirement; encourages employers to hire and retain midlife and older workers and develop personnel policies and practices that are age-neutral; seeks to eliminate age discrimination in employment through educational, legislative, and judicial efforts; and informs older persons of their rights under federal and state age discrimination and pension laws.

Work Force Programs Department

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